

Duncan Campbell tells how
CND stopped Hard Rock

Armageddon postponed

AN ALL-OUT nuclear battle between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, scheduled to start on 2 October, was postponed last week by the Home Office. Fifty nuclear targets all over Britain have, for the time being, escaped devastation. That, at least, was the plan contained in the official scenario for the civil defence exercise Operation *Hard Rock*, which had been due to start on 29 September.

But only 27 of the 54 county or Regional authorities who were asked to play were seriously interested in doing so. Twenty authorities, supporting the nuclear-free zone' movement, had refused any participation. Another seven only agreed to play 'on the basis of very limited participation'.

Meanwhile, the Home Office, which has been planning the exercise over the last fourteen months, has been training, instructing and preparing senior civil servants, who would be the Principal Officers in regional wartime governments, operating from scattered bunkers. The planning, carried out in conjunction with the Army Headquarters of UK Land Forces, had gone so far as to construct elaborate, simulated nightly radio broadcasts, designed for transmission during the final two weeks before the war began. The planning also contained a detailed list of more than 130 British targets, which would be 'attacked' with conventional and nuclear weapons, after war 'broke out' in the early hours of a September morning.

Last week, Mr Whitelaw vowed that the 'devoted effort' put into drawing up the *Hard Rock* plans 'will not be wasted'. 'We can be sure that the experience gained will be put to good use when the